

SCREENING YOUR LIST OF NURSING HOMES

Check the nursing home's Wisconsin State survey (inspection) records. The latest inspection report must be posted in the nursing home, or is available at the Division of Supportive Living, Bureau of Quality Assurance Central and Regional Offices. If you have questions, call the Bureau's Central Office (phone number at the end of this pamphlet).

Your next step should be to call the nursing home's administrator or the person in charge of admissions. The following questions will help you decide which homes you would like to visit:

- Is the home able to provide the types of special care needed by the person?
- Does the home accept payments from Medicare and/or Medicaid?
- Does the home have any openings or is there a waiting list? If there is a list, how long before openings will occur?

Visit as many nursing homes as you can (at least two) so that you can see what they are like. Some things to keep in mind:

- If possible, the potential resident should visit the home with their family and/or friends.
- Try to visit on a weekday at mid-morning or after lunch.
- Allow at least one hour for your visit. Be sure to meet the nursing home's administrator, director of nursing, admissions director, and/or social worker.

Tour the entire nursing home. Use the pamphlet entitled, *Nursing Home Visit Check List*, that accompanies this pamphlet, as a guide when touring the facility. Be sure to observe living areas and interactions among and between staff and residents.

During your tour, ask about the following issues:

- Level of choice a resident has about issues such as when to get up, when to go to bed, etc.;
- Meal service and how it is provided;
- Services available, such as occupational, physical or speech therapy;
- Pharmacies that service the home so that cost estimates of medications can be determined;

- Security system for residents who wander;
- Smoking policy and designated smoking areas;
- Flexibility of the visitation policy in response to family member and resident requests;
- Spiritual services available;
- Privacy;
- Activities and socialization opportunities;
- Resident grievance/complaint policy and procedures;
- Resident council;
- Family council;
- Companion animal programs; and
- Coordination with the county Community Options Program to pursue a community home plan in the future, if desired.

Some residents and visitors may be willing to talk to you about the nursing home. If so, take the time to talk with them; they know the most about life in the nursing home. You may also want to go back another time, for example, in the early evening hours or on the weekend. Note if:

- There are any changes in the delivery of care or services provided to residents by the staff on duty during these times;
- There are evening or weekend activities in progress;
- There are any changes in the quality or quantity of meals served.